

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0484

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR: POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FRENCH DATA ISSUE

REF: STATE 248443 (DTG 061711Z OCT 76)

1. GUIDANCE IN REFTEL DIRECTS DELEGATION TO SEEK A DISCUSSION OF COUNTING RULES WITH THE EAST IN ADVANCE OF TABLING UPDATED WESTERN DATA. THE GUIDANCE ALSO REQUESTS THE DELEGATION TO SUBMIT ITS RECOMMENDATION IF THE EAST REFUSES TO DISCUSS ITS COUNTING RULES UNDER THESE CONDITIONS. THIS MESSAGE CONTAINS SUCH A RECOMMENDATION.

2. US REP MADE STRONG PITCH TO THE SOVIETS ON OCT 4 THAT IT WOULD BE IN MUTUAL INTEREST OF BOTH SIDES TO MAKE FULL USE OF PRESENT ROUND BY ENTERING ON DISCUSSION OF COUNTING RULES PRIOR

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TO THE TABLING OF UPDATED WESTERN DATA. US REP POINTED OUT THAT

WEST HAD IN EFFECT ALREADY PROVIDED DATA ON ITS FORCES NECESSARY FOR SUCH A DISCUSSION. SOVIET REP TARASOV'S REACTION WAS UNAMBIGUOUSLY NEGATIVE (SEE MBFR VIENNA 0471, NOTAL-EXDIS). SOVIETS MADE SIMILAR NEGATIVE POINT IN OCT 5 INFORMAL SESSION (SEE MBFR VIENNA A-119 DTD OCT 12, 1976).

3. FRG REP INFORMED US OCT 8 THAT, PURSUANT TO GUIDANCE FROM BONN, ON OCT 7, WITHOUT MENTIONING THE DATA ISSUE, HE PROPOSED TO SOVIET DEPREP SHUSTOV THAT PARTICIPANTS RETURN TO EARLIER DISCUSSION OF FORCE DEFINITIONS, I.E., COUNTING RULES UNDER ANOTHER LABEL. SHUSTOV RESPONDED FLATLY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THIS TOPIC ONLY REPEAT ONLY AFTER THE WEST HAD TABLED ITS UPDATED DATA. FRG REP THINKS THERE IS NO CHANCE OF CHANGE IN THE SOVIET POSITION.

4. THE DELEGATION CONSIDERS THESE NEGATIVE SOVIET RESPONSES AS DEFINITIVE AND AS FORECLOSING FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE ANY POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSION OF COUNTING RULES WITH THE EAST PRIOR TO TABLING OF UPDATED WESTERN DATA.

5. AS SEEN FROM HERE, IT IS IMPROBABLE THAT A HIGH-LEVEL FRG APPROACH TO THE FRENCH ON THE DATA AND COMMON CEILING ISSUES WILL TAKE PLACE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AT THE EARLIEST. ON OCT 8, FRG REP VOLUNTEERED COMMENT TO US THAT HE DID NOT THINK CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WOULD BE WILLING TO RAISE THE DATA ISSUE WITH GISCARD FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND THAT BONN CONTINUED TO WANT TO PRESS FORWARD WITH CONCEPT DISCUSSED IN LONDON TRILATERAL OF DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR AD HOC GROUP OMITTING FRENCH FROM WESTERN DATA ACCOMPANIED BY SHORT WRITTEN STATEMENT SAYING THIS WAS AN INTERIM POSITION. FRG REP ALSO VOLUNTEERED STATEMENT THAT BONN IS NOW PREPARED TO DROP THE TEXT OF SECOND, SUPPLEMENTARY DRAFT GUIDANCE TO AD HOC GROUP FROM THE PAPER TO BE PRESENTED TO THE FRENCH AND TO LIMIT THE PAPER TO A BRIEF STATEMENT OF VIEWS ON SUBSTANCE OF ISSUE.

6. WE THINK INDEFINITE DELAY IN SEEKING A SOLUTION OF THE FRENCH DATA ISSUE CAN LEAD TO FRICTIONS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. NOW THAT THERE HAS BEEN FURTHER PRESS TREATMENT OF THE SUBJECT, DELAY ALSO ENTAILS THE RISKS OF PUBLIC CONTROVERSY WITH THE FRENCH. HENCE WE SHOULD MOVE FORWARD NOW TO SEEK AN INTERIM SOLUTION.

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7. GIVEN DESIRABILITY OF OPENING A DISCUSSION OF COUNTING RULES WITH THE EAST DURING THE PRESENT ROUND, GERMAN DESIRES TO MOVE AHEAD, AND POTENTIAL RISKS ENTAILED IN INDEFINITE DELAY, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS SHOULD PROCEED WITH THE STEP OF APPROACHING THE FRENCH WITH A DRAFT GUIDANCE OMITTING FRENCH FORCES FROM WESTERN MANPOWER DATA AND, AT THE SAME TIME, GIVING THEM A SHORT AIDE MEMOIRE STATING

THAT THE ACTION WAS OF AN INTERIM NATURE. THE SECOND GUIDANCE TO THE AD HOC GROUP COULD BE DROPPED FROM THIS TEXT.

8. WE SUGGEST THAT THE BELGIANS MIGHT BE DESIGNATED TO BRING TO THE FRENCH NOT ONLY THE DRAFT GUIDANCE OMITTING THE FRENCH BUT THE AIDE MEMOIRE AS WELL. THE FRG COULD, IF IT DESIRED, FOLLOW UP THE BELGIAN APPROACH WITH THE SAME PAPER.

9. THIS SUGGESTED PROCEDURE WOULD REQUIRE THAT AT LEAST ALL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING, OF COURSE, THE BELGIANS, AGREE WITH THE WORDING OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE AS WELL AS THE DRAFT GUIDANCE. THIS PROCESS SHOULD PERMIT AN APPROACH TO THE FRENCH BY EARLY NOVEMBER, GIVING THE CHANCE OF OPENING COUNTING RULES DISCUSSION IN THIS ROUND.

10. WE BELIEVE THE DRAFT GUIDANCE SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE AIDE MEMOIRE. WE THINK THE FRG WILL INSIST ON INFORMING THE FRENCH IN WRITING THAT OMISSION OF THE FRENCH FROM THE FIGURES IS ONLY AN INTERIM STEP AND DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY DESIRABLE TO SEEK TO PERSUADE THE FRG TO DROP THIS POSITION. MOREOVER, WE BELIEVE THAT THE FRG POSITION IS CORRECT.

11. IN OUR VIEW, ANY AGREEMENT WHICH CONTAINS EITHER A FREEZE OR A COMMON CEILING PROVISION WILL ULTIMATELY HAVE TO SPECIFY IN NUMERICAL FORM THE TOTAL LEVEL OF ALL MANPOWER IN THE AREA INCLUDING MANPOWER OF NON-PARTICIPANTS. IT WOULD BE DEMAGING TO LEAVE THE IMPRESSION WITH THE FRENCH NOW THAT THE FIGURES FOR FRENCH MANPOWER COULD BE ELIMINATED PERMANENTLY FROM AN MBFR AGREEMENT OR THAT THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT RESTRICTIONS ON THEIR RIGHT TO ADJUST THE COMMON CEILING TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF INTRODUCTION OF FORCES OF NON-PARTICIPANTS ON EITHER SIDE. IF THIS WERE DONE, WESTERN PARTICIPANTS MIGHT BE OBLIGED TO RETURN TO THE FRENCH ON THESE
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ISSUES UNDER ADVERSE CONDITIONS DURING A CRITICAL PHASE OF REACHING AGREEMENT WITH THE EAST.

12. BELIEVE THERE IS A REASONABLE POSSIBILITY THAT THE FRENCH WILL NOT BLOCK THE TABLING OF WESTERN DATA EXCLUDING THE FRENCH, PARTICULARLY IF THE PAPER GIVEN THE FRENCH INDICATES THAT THE ALLIES PARTICIPATING IN MBFR ARE NOT ASKING FOR IMMEDIATE RESOLUTION OF THE UNDERLYING ISSUES AND THE RECOMMENDED APPROACH THUS PROVIDES FRANCE AN OPENING TO AVOID CONTROVERSY WITHOUT SURRENDERING ITS POSITION. FRG DEPREP HAS TOLD US THAT BELGIAN DEPREP WILLOT REPORTED THAT HE HAD TOLD FRENCH NATO OFFICIALS THAT BELGIM WAS MAKING SOME DRAFTING CHANGES IN THE DRAFT SPC GUIDANCE HE HAD ORIGINALLY SHOWN THEM. WILLOT REPORTED THAT FRENCH OFFICIALS RESPONDED THAT THEY SAW NO DIFFICULTY IN CHANGES AS LONG AS THE "PHILOSPHY" OF THE ORIGINAL BELGIAN

DRAFT WAS PRESERVED.

13. IF THIS APPROACH DOES NOT SUCCEED, IT WOULD NOT PREJUDICE A LATER HIGH LEVEL INTERVENTION. IN FACT, IT WOULD CLARIFY THE ISSUES FOR SUCH DISCUSSION: THE ALLIES WOULD HAVE SHOWN THEIR WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE BY THEIR OFFER TO DROP THE FRENCH OUT OF THE DATA WHILE THE MATTER WAS FURTHER DISCUSSED, WHEREAS THE FRENCH WOULD BE IN THE POSITION OF ATTEMPTING TO RESTRICT THE CAPACITY OF THE MBFR WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS TO ADJUST THE LEVEL OF THEIR OWN FORCES IN THE REDUCTION AREA IN A SITUATION WHERE FRENCH FREEDOM OF ACTION WITH REGARD TO THE LEVEL OF FRENCH FORCES IN THE FRG WOULD BE FULLY ASSURED.

14. IF THIS MOVE SUCCEEDS AND THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS TABLE DATA WHICH OMITTS FRENCH FORCES, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SOVIETS MAY DECLINE TO DISCUSS THEIR COUNTING RULES UNTIL WESTERN PARTICIPANTS HAVE PRESENTED DATA INCLUDING THE FRENCH FORCES. HOWEVER, CONTACTS WITH THE SOVIETS SINCE THE OPENING OF THIS ROUND HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THEY SEE A COUNTING RULE DISCUSSION AS THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THUS, WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME THESE POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS.

15. WE SUBMIT THE DRAFT TEXT OF A SHORTENED ACCOMPANYING PAPER IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE.RESOR

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